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ABSTRACT

This document examines strategies for preventing working families and disadvantaged youth from needing cash assistance and becoming dependent on welfare. The document begins with a brief discussion of the tenuous nature of the boundary between families who need public assistance and families who don't and factors contributing to welfare dependency. The next section answers policy questions pertaining to the following issues: (1) the feasibility of various strategies for supplementing income to assist low-wage workers in avoiding welfare dependency; (2) types of supports needed to help assist low-income families in securing and retaining employment; (3) services needed to help youth and children become self-sufficient adults (workforce development, child care, transportation, health care, mental health services, substance abuse services, and disability-related services, housing assistance, and domestic violence services); (4) actions states can take to help families find alternatives to welfare; and (5) federal funds available to support states' efforts to prevent welfare dependency. Pertinent research findings are presented along with profiles of two innovative national programs and innovative programs in California, Maryland, New York, and Ohio. Concluding the document are the addresses (including World Wide Web addresses, when available) of 7 resource contacts and sources for 38 pertinent publications. (MN)

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Prevention of Welfare Dependency–An Overview

Jan Kaplan

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Prevention of Welfare Dependency -- An Overview

By Jan Kaplan

Background

As welfare caseloads steadily decrease, states now have the opportunity to focus resources on efforts that may prevent working families and disadvantaged youth from needing cash assistance.

The boundary between families who are in need of public assistance and those who are not is tenuous. In many of these families, at least one adult is working but is earning wages that are too low to lift the family above the federal poverty level or to ensure economic self-sufficiency. One in six nonelderly Americans lives in a family with an income less than 200 percent of poverty (Acs, 2000). In addition, young children growing up in poor families without appropriate interventions are at higher risk of experiencing poverty as adults. Between nine and sixteen million children and youth are growing up in disadvantaged environments that may compromise their chances for successful lives (MacLellan, 2000). Changes in employment or family situation could lead any of these families or youth to enter the welfare system.

There are, in fact, many specific, contributing factors that can lead a family to become welfare-dependent. While the risk factors often are interrelated, they can be grouped as follows: 1) inadequate wage and non-wage supports, 2) lack of employment supports, and, 3) disadvantages in childhood and youth. Without timely and appropriate supports, families with one or more of these risk factors are more likely to enter, and become dependent upon, the welfare system.

Policy Issues

Coordinated, multi-faceted interventions are necessary to address the complexity of risk factors that can lead to welfare dependency. As states develop programs to prevent welfare dependency and to support long-term self-sufficiency, they may want to consider the following issues.

Can income be supplemented to assist low-wage workers to avoid welfare dependency? Supplementing wages through income and benefit supports can raise living standards and improve the likelihood that a low-wage worker will find work more attractive than welfare, remain in a job, and advance up the career ladder. The various approaches to income and benefit supports are described below. Also, see http://www.makingwageswork.org and http://www.welfareinfo.org/earningsupp.htm.

Increase the minimum wage. Minimum wage supporters believe that a higher minimum wage can be an effective work incentive for low-wage workers, particularly when complemented with other income supports, and can give poor families a stronger economic base. Opponents believe that teenagers working in the service sector, the majority of whom are not impoverished, would benefit the most from any increase in the minimum wage. They also believe that higher employer costs associated with a higher wage would result in fewer job opportunities for low-wage workers and in higher consumer prices. Ten states have raised their minimum wage higher than the current federal wage of $5.15 per hour. Other states considering a minimum wage increase may want to assure the

adequacy of other income supports to maximize the effect of the increase on overall income. They also may want to consider the empirical evidence regarding the effects of a wage increase both on family income and on employers.

Living wage. More than 40 cities across the country require employers doing business with them to pay their workers at least a "living wage," which provides a full-time worker with dependents an income that is just above the federal poverty line. Advocacy groups now are focusing on establishing "self-sufficiency standards" that include the costs of health benefits, vacation days, community hiring goals, child care, transportation, geographical differences in the cost of living, etc. For sample methodologies that may be used to determine a living wage or self-sufficiency standard, visit http://www.epinet.org, call 202/331-5537 or see Bernstein, 2000.

Increase the number of hours worked. Increasing the number of hours worked from part-time to full-time and from seasonal to year-round will yield more income and improve the economic situation of a working poor family, particularly if that family takes advantage of other government benefit programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (see below). However, many single mothers are unable to balance the responsibilities of a full-time job with family responsibilities without adequate supports, including child care and transportation. Therefore, states interested in working with the business community to create more full-time jobs targeted to low-wage workers will need to increase the availability of child care, transportation and other employment supports.

Unemployment benefits. For low-income workers who have lost jobs through no fault of their own, unemployment insurance (UI) may be a source of enough temporary income to avoid cash assistance. However, many low-wage workers may not meet state eligibility requirements as they frequently change jobs and are not employed full-time. States interested in expanding UI availability while meeting federal requirements have several options. For example, an alternative base period allows workers to count their most recent earnings in order to qualify for UI benefits. In addition, eligibility based solely upon the number of hours worked could replace monetary criteria. Also, under new federal regulations, states may provide UI benefits to workers on family leave and a number of states are expanding UI eligibility to cover workers who leave jobs as a result of domestic issues, as well as for part-time workers. Some states are increasing benefits for individuals with dependent children or elders in their household, and are simplifying the application and job search requirements. Finally, in response to employer concerns, a number of states are considering cuts in employer UI tax rates, in light of the current strength of state trust funds. (Also, visit http://www.nelp.org/action1.htm.)

Earned Income Tax Credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the primary source of federal tax relief for the working poor, enables low-income workers to retain more earnings by supplementing wages for workers earning the minimum wage and offsetting taxes for those who earn more. The success of the federal EITC has led 15 states and one local government (Montgomery County, MD) to enact their own EITC. States or localities considering an EITC will need to determine if the credit should be refundable (families receive a refund if the size of the credit is more than its tax bill) or nonrefundable (income tax is reduced or waived, but any excess credits are not refunded); the amount of the credit and its relationship to the federal credit; and, a revenue source (see Johnson, November 2000 and Friedman, 2000.)

Changes to the state tax codes. The state tax burden on the working poor can be substantially reduced through tax credits and changes to state income tax thresholds. Child and dependent care tax credits and deductions can offset child care costs not covered by subsidies and can assist with costs for families ineligible for subsidies (see Johnson, October 2000.). States also may modify their income tax rates to increase net earnings for low-wage workers and encourage labor market participation. For example, fewer than half of the states impose income taxes on families with incomes below the federal poverty level and many states have raised the income tax threshold, the

income level at which families start paying taxes, through changes in standard deductions, and other modifications. States also can use the tax code to encourage employers to offer certain benefits to low-income workers. Several states have enacted tax credits for businesses that establish on-site child care facilities, supplementing federal tax policy. Others provide tax credits to employers who offer child care subsidies to their employees. Some states also are considering tax subsidies for employer-provided health benefits. However, the effectiveness of these tax advantages has not been determined and state experience with them is extremely limited. Finally, states might consider ways to lessen the burden of sales and use taxes, particularly on necessary items such as food, clothing, heating fuel, and other utilities. Setting a dollar limit on these exemptions can control state costs and the potential impact of lost revenues on local services, and targets the exemptions to low-income families. For example, a clothing exemption could be limited to purchases under $100. (Also, see Palladino, 2000 or visit http://www.welfareinfo.org/incometax.htm.)

Earning supplements. Providing supplemental wages to the working poor is another option for policymakers interested in encouraging work and increasing economic stability for low-income workers. For example, the New Hope Project in Milwaukee, Wisconsin provided financial support along with social supports to low-income workers who were not eligible for cash assistance and who were willing to work full-time. New Hope's success in encouraging work and increasing financial well-being illustrates the importance of combining earnings supplements with social supports and participation mandates, such as full-time work.

Benefit supplementation. Family income can be enhanced and stabilized through non-cash benefits, including health care, child care, nutrition, housing and transportation assistance. As described above, state and federal tax policies can support employer decisions to offer certain benefits to their employees. In addition, public subsidies for child care, housing, and transportation assistance can ease this large financial burden on low-wage working families. Strengthening Medicaid, food stamps, and the Women's, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program in order to cover the working poor also will decrease out-of-pocket costs and eliminate disincentives to work.

Child support enforcement and assurance. Child support can be an important source of income for families attempting to avoid welfare dependency. Data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF) show that only 29 percent of poor children with a nonresident parent actually receive child support due both to difficulties with enforcement and to financial hardship among the parent responsible for child support payments (Sorenson, 2000). State and federal policymakers will need to continue to explore creative ways to increase child support payments, either through formal support orders or through informal agreements.

Child Support Assurance (CSA) can be another source of financial support for single parent households. States that have established demonstrations or are implementing CSA programs include New York, California, Virginia, Minnesota and Colorado. Under a CSA program, children for whom a child support order has been obtained are guaranteed a set income each month. These payments supplement the custodial parent's earnings and bring the family income above the federal poverty level (see Roberts, 1999 or visit http://www.clasp.org/pubs/childassurance/child_support_assurance.htm).

What types of supports are needed to assist low-income families to secure and retain employment? Public/private collaborations are needed to build a system of comprehensive life and work skills programs to help low-income women balance work and family situations and avoid welfare dependency. In addition to the key employment-related supports described below, they will need a wide range of social services, as well as parenting education, time and financial management training, peer support, and mentoring assistance. Also, see Johnson, 1998

Workforce development. Workforce development agencies, businesses, educational organizations, and social service agencies need to provide a full range of job preparation and career advancement services to meet the needs of this population. Pre-employment services, such as Adult Basic Education, literacy classes, English as a Second Language, and vocational education, combined with on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs can greatly improve job potential and earnings capacity. Pre-employment programs also should provide "soft skills" training to develop interpersonal and problem-solving skills, as well as "life skills" training on personal money management, goal setting, and contingency planning for family emergencies to help prevent job loss. Post-secondary education can promote career advancement for employed workers and increase earnings. Finally, job placement assistance that focuses on growth-potential jobs and rapid reemployment programs that address the frequent job loss typical among low-wage workers, are critical to state efforts to support employment and prevent welfare dependency.

Child care. Policymakers should consider ways to increase the accessibility of child and care services that meet the particular needs of low-income families who may work rotating shifts or have extremely long commutes that extend beyond the normal child care hours. Changes in state tax policies and subsidies can encourage the development of work-based child care facilities and can provide incentives for child care providers to increase the supply of off-hours and back-up child care. Expansions of child care subsidies, tax credits and sliding fee schedules also can reduce long waiting periods that confront nonwelfare families seeking financial assistance. Finally, strong child care licensing standards will ensure that facilities are safe and staff is appropriately trained.

Transportation. Transportation to and from work can be a serious barrier for low-income families trying to sustain stable employment. Any state effort to support employment for low-wage workers will need to include public transportation systems to serve the business sectors that are primary employers of low-income workers, such as service industries, and to bring workers from urban areas to jobs located in suburban or rural areas. States also may want to identify ways to increase vehicle ownership for low-income workers living in areas without public transportation.

Health care, mental health, and substance abuse services. Expansion of public and private health insurance for the working poor is critical to their successful employment and welfare avoidance. Research has shown that the availability of health insurance coverage positively affects decisions to move from welfare to work and will affect decisions of low-income workers to remain in the workforce. Furthermore, the lack of health insurance can be a strong disincentive to enter or remain in the workforce and places these families at risk of serious health problems that can impact their ability to retain employment. However, too few low-income workers are offered insurance through the workplace and most have incomes that are above the eligibility threshold for existing public programs. Approaches to expanding health insurance coverage are summarized in Kaplan, 2000.

Mental health and substance abuse problems also can lead to lower rates of labor force participation as well as reduced work hours. Individuals with mental health and substance abuse problems may not have access to screening and treatment services until they seek cash assistance. To assist individuals to overcome mental health problems and retain employment, mental health treatment should be integrated with the full range of job-related services. There also is evidence that individuals who complete a residential substance abuse treatment program are more likely to obtain and maintain employment. States may want to consider ways to increase treatment options through changes in insurance coverage and provider incentives.

Disability-related services. Without adequate workplace accommodations, individuals with disabilities also are likely to experience problems obtaining and maintaining employment and may receive lower wages than individuals without disabilities. To provide the needed skills training, as well as assistance with ways to compensate for a disability in the workplace, vocational rehabilitation

needs to be coordinated with employment-related services, work-based learning, and assessment programs. However, under federal law, vocational rehabilitation programs must give priority to individuals with severe disabilities. They, therefore, only serve a small percentage of individuals with work-related limitations. States may want to explore additional funding streams to allow vocational rehabilitation programs to provide services to individuals with work-related disabilities outside of federal requirements (see Johnson 1998). In addition, states should explore ways to secure cash resources other than TANF for those individuals with more severe disabilities who may be unable to sustain employment. Social Security Income (SSI) may be an option for some of these individuals and may link them to more appropriate services and long-term income support.

Housing assistance. High housing costs, poor quality housing, crowded living conditions, homelessness, and blighted neighborhoods with high levels of crime, scarce governmental services, and lack of employment opportunities can lead to unemployment and family stressors that are precursors to welfare dependency. States might consider ways to assist clients with housing costs through rent freezes and cash assistance for security deposits or by providing vouchers or subsidies for housing in alternative, cleaner neighborhoods that are near employment sites.

Domestic violence services. Women suffering from domestic violence are at particular risk of welfare dependency as a result of both the physical effects and the emotional stress associated with their domestic situations. Meeting the daily requirements of employment may be impossible for victims of domestic violence leading to job loss and lower personal income. The complexity of domestic violence situations necessitates a strong state commitment to collaboration among police and probation offices, courts, domestic violence shelters, advocates, health care providers, other social service providers, employers and employment-related services.

What services do children and youth need to become self-sufficient as adults? Programs such as Head Start and universal pre-kindergarten have demonstrated the role that quality early childhood care and education can play in future academic achievement and subsequent outcomes, particularly for low-income children. As a result, many states are expanding their support for a wide variety of early childhood programs. (Visit http://www.welfareinfo.org/childhoodpovwelfref.htm for examples of state programs.) However, there are many environmental and familial factors that may counteract the positive long-term impact of these programs. In particular, children and youth who grow up in poverty often live in situations characterized by family instability that may stem from substance abuse, health and mental health issues, inadequate housing, single-parenthood, domestic violence, etc. The most effective programs for disadvantaged children, therefore, need to be multi-faceted in nature and should provide a range of health, mental health, academic and social services beginning at an early age and continuing through school age.

In addition, disadvantaged teen-agers are more likely to engage in behaviors that are detrimental to their future wellbeing and can lead to future welfare receipt. Teens who grow up in more stable family environments and engage in these same behaviors are at higher risk of future welfare dependency, as well. The difference between the future outcomes for these two cohorts may depend on the timeliness and appropriateness of interventions that address the behaviors. Programs serving "at-risk youth" can be effective in moving teens away from self-destructive behaviors that ultimately leads to welfare dependency. The intent of any youth development program should be to prevent and remediate risky behavior, build self-esteem, and emphasize positive development to enhance the potential for self-sufficiency. Programs should include: the integration of education, health, mental heath, substance abuse, employment, and vocational services through community-based collaborations; family and peer support; mentoring programs; linkages with private business to foster work-based learning; and community service opportunities. Programs may target youth living in families that are receiving cash assistance, as those youth are at higher risk of welfare dependency as adults. Programs also may target pregnant teens, runaway and homeless youth, juvenile delinquents,

school dropouts, etc., or they can serve all youth (also, see MacLellan, 2000; Kaplan, 1999 or visit http://www.welfareinfo.org/youth.htm).

What can states do to assist families to find alternatives to welfare? States may provide cash or other assistance to families under an "applicant diversion" policy designed as an alternative to welfare. States with diversion policies may offer one-time lump-sum payments, possibly equal to several months welfare benefits, to meet short-term emergency needs, thereby "diverting" the applicant away from welfare. The payment may be of cash, vouchers or third party payments to assist with costs associated with car repairs, child care, utility payments, rental assistance, employment-related expenses, etc. Under many diversion policies, a recipient of short-term assistance relinquishes her right to apply for and receive welfare benefits for some time period. Diversion payments appear to be effective in preventing dependency as very few recipients of the short-term assistance return to the welfare agency to apply for welfare (Johnson, 1998). States will need to train staff to ensure that they screen potential applicants to determine their eligibility for the one-time assistance and that they provide correct information to applicants about this option and its requirements.

What federal funds are available to support states' efforts to prevent welfare dependency? A number of federal funding streams can support state efforts to prevent welfare dependency. Under federal regulations, states may spend TANF block grant funds on any services that support employment and encourage self-sufficiency among low-income families with at least one child. Examples of allowable expenditures include transportation and child care assistance, housing subsidies, state earned income tax credits, wage supplements, job training, career counseling, and employer incentives. In addition, states can use the funds to provide short-term financial assistance to needy families and for a variety of services targeting at-risk youth. States also may fund these services outside the TANF program using maintenance of effort (MOE) dollars. In addition, federal regulations allow states to fund prevention services by transferring a portion of their TANF block grant to the Child Care and Development and the Social Services block grants (also, see Greenberg, 1999 and Cohen, 2000).

States may use funds available through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for employment retention and advancement services for low-income adults and youth (see Brown, 1998). Federal Welfare-to-Work grants may be used for job development and job training strategies aimed at noncustodial parents of children receiving assistance through TANF, SSI, Medicaid, Food Stamps or the Children's Health Insurance Program. These funds may only be used to support noncustodial parents who are having trouble meeting child support obligations and who are willing to enter into a personal responsibility contract obligating them to assist in their child's financial support.

Other federal funding streams available to states include grant programs in the Department of Education that support post-secondary education and youth development programs, such as Work-Study, Pell grants, School-to-Work, and others. Federal funding for youth development programs also comes from the Social Services and Community Development block grants, Americorps USA, the Juvenile Mentoring Program in the Department of Justice, the Adolescent Family Life Program in the Department of Health and Human Services, Youthbuild in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 4-H Youth Development in the Department of Agriculture, and Youth Fair Chance in the Department of Labor. Also, visit http://www.reeusda.gov/pavnet/ff/ffnative.htm.

In addition, there are a number of sources of federal support for child care programs. Depending on the intended use of the funds, states may access any of the following: Head Start, Child Care and Development Funds, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Social Services block grant, TANF, WIA, and the Job Training Partnership Act.

The majority of federal funds for transportation comes from the Access to Jobs program in the U.S. Department of Transportation. States also can allocate TANF and MOE dollars and can use federal Welfare-to-Work grant funds to support transportation initiatives. Several programs in the Department of Housing and Urban Development provide funding for transportation, including Bridges to Work and Empowerment Zones. Also, visit http://www.ctaa.org or call 202/628-1480.

Finally, states may be able to use the TANF block grant, Welfare-to-Work funds, the Social Services and the Community Services block grants and Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program to support a wide range of other services. These include substance abuse and mental health treatment, housing assistance, case management, career counseling, peer support, parenting education, life skills training, and programs for people with work-related disabilities. For additional information, visit the program and management issue area pages on the WIN web site at http://www.welfareinfo.org.

Research Findings

A recent review of analyses of the low-wage labor market found a rising trend in the proportion of low-wage earners and found that poverty is more prevalent among those workers who are minorities, are less-educated or are women with families (Kaye, 2000). Demographic analyses also show that only one-tenth of working low-income families are headed by a college graduate, compared to one-third of nonpoor families, and that those workers typically are younger and less likely to be married. The same study indicates that these low-income workers have less stable jobs with fewer benefits and little growth opportunity, all indicators of potential future low earnings and risk of welfare dependency (Acs, 2000). A large body of research has looked at other risk factors, particularly the relationship of teenage pregnancy and childbearing to future welfare dependency, and has found that early childbearing results in lower educational status and affects future employment opportunities, marital options and family structure (Advocates for Youth, 1999).

Research on the effects of a minimum wage increase has found no significant negative effect on employment opportunities and a positive impact on family income (Lazare, 1998). Simulations of the effects of increases in the minimum wage and in hours worked have found that both would raise some families' incomes. However, increases in hours worked may result in more families experiencing higher incomes (Acs, 2000). Researchers looking at other wage supports have documented the effectiveness of the EITC and other tax credits in increasing labor force participation and income (Kaye, 2000). Finally, evaluation results of the New Hope project found that wage supplements coupled with work supports resulted in increased employment and income, and in improvements in the well-being of the children in participating families (Berlin, 2000).

A literature review of workforce development research concluded that work experience should be linked with education and training in order to prepare entry-level workers for better paying jobs (Golonka, 1998). A recent study of the impact of work/family responsibilities on employment decisions by low-income women highlights the importance of adequate child and after-school care for low-income women entering or reentering the workforce. The study concluded that inadequate supervision before and after school and after regular child care hours could deter some women from working early or late shifts, resulting in less flexibility in finding employment (Scott, 2000).

Evaluation results from the Gatreaux Program in Chicago, which provided vouchers to poor families to allow them to relocate from public housing to areas closer to jobs, strongly suggest that having a choice of housing location can have a positive impact on employment as well as on childhood outcomes. Other research also has found a positive relationship between improvements in neighborhoods and childhood outcomes (Duncan, 2000).

An overview of research on early childhood care and education programs finds that quality programs with adequate financial support can have a significant effect on school readiness and future potential for self-sufficiency (Currie, 1998). Researchers also have found that quality youth development programs which include holistic services and involve the community and parents/guardians can be successful in building self-esteem and wide-ranging competencies (Kaplan, 1999 and American Youth Policy Forum, 1999).

Additional research findings regarding approaches to preventing welfare dependency are summarized in the WIN publications referenced in this *Issue Note* and at http://www.researchforum.org.

Innovative Practices

The following programs are illustrative of the range of state and local approaches to assisting low-income families to avoid welfare dependency. For additional examples, please refer to the WIN publications and electronic resources identified throughout this *Issue Note*.

California -- Winning New Jobs (WNJ) workshops focus on promoting reemployment in high-quality jobs and preventing poor mental health among the unemployed by improving job search skills and increasing self-esteem, confidence and motivation in job search. The California program replicates a highly successful program of the Michigan Prevention Research Center and has been operating in three California locations since 1997. Contact David Navarro at 415/781-3800 or vdnavarro@mdrcsf.org; or visit http://www.winningnewjobs.org.

Maryland -- The state's benefit diversion program assesses applicants for their reasons for applying for cash assistance or their continued reliance on assistance, with special emphasis on their skills, needs, and job readiness, and offers Welfare Avoidance Grants to individuals who are employed or near employment, but are in need of short-term aid. The grants do not duplicate any period of cash assistance. Contact Mark Millspaugh at 410/767-7338.

New York -- After county-level pilot Child Assistance Programs (CAPs) were found to increase employment and earnings and lower public assistance expenditures, New York state expanded its program to allow any county to establish a program as an alternative to TANF. Under CAP, custodial parents who agree to leave the traditional welfare system have lower income tax rates and are guaranteed a child support payment regardless of whether the non-custodial parent is able to pay. As an incentive to work, CAP pays less cash assistance to those individuals who are not working, but substantially more to those who have earnings. CAP also places no restrictions on savings and separates the program from county welfare offices as a way to promote self-sufficiency. Contact Chris Hamilton at 617/492-7100.

Ohio -- WIRE-Net (the Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network), a nonprofit network of residents, employers, and employees serves Cleveland's westside and offers training for entry-level and incumbent employees. The program provides pre-apprenticeship machinist and math remediation training, interviewing and job retention skills, and leadership development for first-time supervisors. In addition, WIRE-Net refers residents to local companies for interviews and potential full-time employment and has linked employers to sources of funding to support training programs. Contact Joan Cook at 216/631-7330 or visit http://www.wire-net.org.

Santa Cruz and Berkeley, CA -- Recent living wage ordinances set a new precedent for wage level and scope. The new Santa Cruz ordinance established the highest living wage in the country -- $11 an hour with health benefits and $12 an hour without benefits. Contact Sandy Brown at 831/457-1741 or visit http://members.cruzers.com/cab/livingwage/livingwage.html. The Berkeley ordinance created the nation's first area-based living wage by requiring all employees at the Berkeley Marina, a city-owned facility, to receive a living wage of $9.75 an hour with health benefits and $11.37 without

benefits. For information about Berkeley and other living wage ordinances, visit http://www.afscme.org/livingwage/livchart.htm.

Communities in Schools, Inc. (CIS) is a nationwide, independent network of 154 local and 15 state offices that provides stay-in-school programs through collaborations with the private and public sectors at the national, regional, state and local levels. Partnering organizations provide resources and skills to local schools to support programs that include mentoring, tutoring, parental involvement, mental health counseling, drug abuse education, after-school activities, health and dental exams, teen parenting services, violence and gang prevention, technology training, career counseling and employment skills training, community service opportunities, and college preparation, as well as referrals to social services for students at risk of academic failure. Contact CIS at 800/247-4543 or visit http://www.cisnet.org.

Women in Community Service (WICS) offers support services, mentoring and workforce preparation programs in order to reduce poverty by promoting self-reliance and economic independence. Local programs nationwide serve more than 150,000 low-income individuals through: customized programs to help companies hire, train and retain entry-level workers; partnerships with public and private agencies to deliver lifeskills, job readiness and support services to low-income women; and training and technical assistance to public and private youth-serving organizations on successful approaches to youth development. Contact WICS at 703/671-0500 or visit http://www.wics.org.

Resource Contacts

- Center for Law and Social Policy, Julie Strawn, Mark Greenberg, 202/328-5140.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Ed Lazare, 202/408-1080.
- Economic Policy Institute, Nan Gibson, 202/775-8810 or ngibson@epinet.org; Chauna Brocht, 202/331-5537 or cbrocht@epinet.org; or http://www.epinet.org.
- U.S. Employment and Training Administration, http://wdr.doleta.gov/contacts/.
- Living Wage Resource Center, Jen Kern, 202/547/2500 or natacorncam@acorn.org; or http://www.livingwagecampaign.org
- Urban Institute, Gregory Acs, 202/833-7200 or gacs@ui.urban.org
- National Governors' Association, Scott Palladino, 202/624-5392; Thomas MacLellan, 202/624-5300.

Publications and Electronic Resources

ACORN. *National Living Wage Resource Center.* Washington, D.C.: ACORN. Visit http://www.livingwagecampaign.org/

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